

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-8 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 3-6 are amended; Claims 7-8 are added; and Claim 2 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment. Support for the new and amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings. No new matter is presented.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Abstract was objected to because of a minor informality; Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by La Porta et al. (U.S. Pat. 6,763,007, hereinafter La Porta); Claims 4-6 are allowed; and Claims 2 and 3 were objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but will be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claim 2 and is further amended to correct cosmetic matters of form. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent Claim is patentable over the applied references, and request that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102 be withdrawn.

Further, Claims 4-6, which were indicated as allowable over the applied references are also amended only to correct minor informalities and cosmetic matters of form. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 4-6 are still in condition for allowance.

Also, new Claims 7 and 8 are added, which recite substantially similar features as allowed method Claim 4. Claim 7 is an apparatus claim intended to not be interpreted under 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph, while Claim 8 is an apparatus claim intended to be interpreted under 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully

submit that new independent Claims 7 and 8 also patentably define over the applied references.

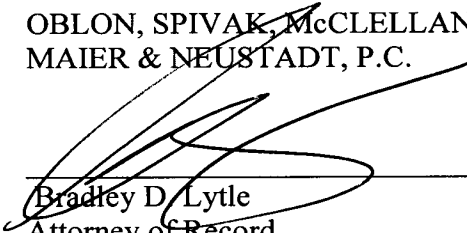
In response to the objection to the Abstract, the Abstract is amended to be in proper format and language. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the Abstract be withdrawn.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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